

ToR for the setup of a LDAC Focus Group on Regional Fisheries Management in West Africa

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At the LDAC Working Group 4 meeting held on 30 September 2021, the members agreed to set up a dedicated focus group to deal with regional governance for fish stocks in West Africa. Specific mention was made to the dire straits' situation of some pelagic stocks (in particular sardinella) due to lack of proper scientific evaluations and historical levels of overexploitation both by local-artisanal and international-industrial fleets.

In this sense, the scientific presentation provided by Floor Quirijns on stock assessment / status of main small pelagic species and a concept paper provided by Ad Corten on historical overview of progress of assessment and management of small pelagic stocks in West Africa was considered as a good basis for kick-off discussions:

CECAF Summary report on FAO working group on the assessment of small pelagic fish off Northwest Africa 2021:

https://ldac.eu/images/2021_WGSPN_summary_EN.pdf

Ad Corten paper:

https://ldac.eu/images/Perspectives_of_regional_fisheries_management_in_northwest_Africa.pdf

The summary of his contribution is available on the following link:

https://ldac.eu/images/Perspectives_of_regional_fisheries_management_in_northwest_Africa.pdf

Regarding institutional and governance frameworks, it was agreed to look at the LDAC advice on regional management for west African fisheries and the reply from the European Commission, identifying those actions where progress has been made, in particular regarding the idea to enhance the role of CECAF and either transform it in an RFMO or create a new dedicated international organisation for such purpose.

- LDAC advice (May 2021): https://ldac.eu/images/ES_Dictamen_LDAC_Gestion_Regional_Pesqueras_Africa_Occidental_R-04-21.WG4.pdf
- EC reply (June 2021): https://ldac.eu/images/EC_Reply_to_Advice_West_Africa_R-04-21-WG4_21June2021.pdf

The Focus Group will consist in a series of sessions (2-3) called for every 4-6 weeks during the second and third quarter of 2022. It will be composed of 10-12 WG4 members with knowledge and expertise on this matter plus 2-5 invited experts (scientific researchers, fisheries consultants, policy makers, fisheries economists...) to inform discussions.

The aim of the Focus Group is to improve biological knowledge to underpin conservation and management of West African pelagic and demersal stocks; and produce a policy advice with recommendations towards building a robust institutional framework and better process of data collection, processing and analysis. The advice will contain recommendations seeking effective governance rules and scientific and management support, including the possibility of enhancing the role of CECAF as regional fisheries body and considering either its transformation into an RFMO or the creation of a new one.

A draft advice will be tabled for discussion and, if agreed, adoption, at the next WG4 meeting, foreseen for October-November 2022.